

## **Statement from Jeffrey Bleich**

I don't recall a discussion with FB representatives about an Australian policy proposal to "extend its jurisdiction" and so I'd need to see what that refers to. I know, however, that I would not have said that the Australian Government failed to understand the needs of technology companies. On the contrary, I believed – and continue to believe – that Australia's government and laws were welcoming to new technologies and this was part of why Australians were such early adopters of a wide range of U.S.-created social media products at the time. I thought Australian law and lawmakers were generally welcoming to Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, and other social media platforms. If I said anything at all, it would be that I'd look into whatever concerns FB representatives had raised about some pending legislation.

I don't recall having any discussions with the Australian government about Facebook or its concerns. If I offered to look into a question of pending legislation, I'd generally refer that to our economic counselor. If there were a real issue, then we would raise it internally and see if it was a matter that the U.S. Government felt needed to be addressed, and generally we'd all try to resolve it at a bureaucratic level. If an issue like that came back to me, requiring that I have a direct exchange with a member of Government, then I would likely have remembered the issue. For that reason, I'm fairly sure that I never discussed whatever pending legislation is referenced here with the Australian government.

As Ambassador, I definitely did not "lobby." My responsibility was to advance U.S. and alliance interests. Accordingly, my only interest in any U.S. commercial entities was to ensure that U.S. businesses were treated fairly, and to advance U.S. economic interests around the globe. The same principles are true for Australian Ambassadors advocating for Australian companies in the U.S.. I did not advocate for any particular company's interest, but I would advocate against policies that uniquely disadvantaged American businesses – for example I would oppose restrictions on U.S. beef products. That is not lobbying because I had no commercial or economic interest in -- or anything to gain personally from -- any companies whose interests were at issue. I advocated on behalf of the U.S. Government (and only the U.S. Government) without concern for which particular U.S. businesses might be burdened or benefited by a particular policy.

As Ambassador I would occasionally raise issues with the Australian government about policies that concerned U.S. businesses. This could be anything from import restrictions to net neutrality to piracy laws. I advocated, for example, against the notion of "cloud sovereignty" because the U.S. Government favored a policy of storing data in the most secure cloud location regardless of which country hosted that particular cloud service. Again, I wouldn't be representing the individual companies affected. Instead, if the

U.S. felt that a company had identified a valid concern about another nation's laws or practices, then we'd raise a concern about the law or practice as a way of defending U.S. interests. Likewise, if there were a contract at issue and the choice was between a U.S. company and a company from a different country, the U.S. would work to make sure that the process was fair and no other country received favored treatment. But that is it. I never advocated to the Australian government on behalf of a company while I was Ambassador.